

WASHINGTON, DC – Yesterday, Congressman Bobby Scott (VA-03) joined 46 of his colleagues in a bipartisan letter to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel urging the Department of Defense to reinstate tuition assistance for service members.

“While we understand the Department of Defense must make tough choices in the face of sequestration and current budget cuts, we wholly disagree with the decisions to suspend this critical program,” Scott and his colleagues wrote to Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel.

The military tuition assistance programs pay up to \$250 per semester hour for active duty personnel, or as much as \$4,500 per year. But because of cuts required under sequestration, the programs have been suspended by the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army, U.S. Marines and the U.S. Coast Guard. The U.S. Navy has not suspended its program so far.

The full text of the letter is below. [Click here for a pdf copy of the original letter](#) .

Dear Secretary Hagel:

We write to urge the immediate reinstatement of all suspended Department of Defense tuition assistance programs. Earlier this month, the Army, Marines, and Air Force suspended all tuition assistance programs as a cost-savings measure due to sequestration. While we understand the Department of Defense must make tough choices in the face of sequestration and current budget cuts, we wholly disagree with the decisions to suspend this critical program.

As you know, tuition assistance programs provide service members the opportunity to better themselves personally and professionally. Service members can use tuition assistance programs to earn a diploma, gain college credit, and even earn a college degree. Not only do these programs benefit the individual service member, but they also benefit the armed forces as a whole. Tuition assistance programs enable soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines to directly contribute to the professionalization of their individual service component. As a voluntary program, we applaud every participant who has striven to better themselves, their organization, and their country through education.

The tuition assistance program must be allowed to continue unhindered. Our service members have come to rely on support from the Department and Congress for this needed program. In the Army alone, over 201,000 soldiers participated in Fiscal Year 2012. The number of Army participants shows the value of the program and the commitment to personal and professional growth.

We strongly urge you to reconsider the decision to allow the services to suspend tuition assistance and provide our service member's with the education assistance they have earned.

Thank you for your efforts and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Rep. Ron Barber

Rep. Pete P. Gallego

Rep. Mark Pocan

Rep. Spencer Bachus

Rep. Raul M. Grijalva

Rep. Ted Poe

Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis

Rep. Denny Heck

Rep. Nick J. Rahall, II

Rep. Madeleine Z. Bordallo

Rep. Rush Holt

Rep. Charles B. Rangel

Rep. John R. Carter

Rep. Daniel T. Kildee

Rep. Bobby Rush

Rep. Kathy Castor

Rep. Ann M. Kuster

Rep. Loretta Sanchez

Rep. David Cicilline

Rep. David Loesback

Rep. Adam B. Schiff

Rep. John Conyers, Jr.

Rep. Alan Lowenthal

Rep. Bobby Scott

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings

Rep. Ed Markey

Rep. Carol Shea-Porter

Rep. Peter A. DeFazio

Rep. Jim Matheson

Rep. Eric Swalwell

Rep. Suzan K. DelBene

Rep. Betty McCollum

Rep. Mark Takano

Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro

Rep. James P. McGovern

Rep. Mike Thompson

Rep. John D. Dingell

Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton

Rep. Niki Tsongas

Rep. Lloyd Doggett

Rep. Beto O'Rourke

Rep. Juan Vargas

Rep. Sam Farr

Rep. Scott Peters

Rep. Maxine Waters

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard

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